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Our lively frolicking chipmunks

by
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I suppose most people get to know chipmunks when as youngsters they see one scurry around a summer campsite. Maybe, unless a grownup said "No," you even chased one up a tree or into a hole in the rocks.

These perky squirrels are found in most of Washington except from about October through March. As cold weather comes, they move to nests in ground burrows to drowse away the winter. During warmer periods they waken to munch on food stored away during the summer.

Chipmunks include the smallest of Washington's squirrels (body length, 7½ to 10 inches—190 to 258mm). They range through evergreen forests and

brushlands into open sagebrush hill-sides. Seeds and other vegetable matter are used extensively for food, but these versatile animals will eat insects.

Even though chipmunks frolic and forage during the day they are often hard to see in the forest. Often, if you hear one "chirping" and stand very still, the brown and white animal with five dark stripes will dash from one bit of cover to another.

In Washington chipmunks are considered a valuable non-game resource and protected by state law.

Next summer, when you are in a rural area, sit for a while and listen; maybe you're in chipmunk habitat. If you are, this small clown will entertain you.